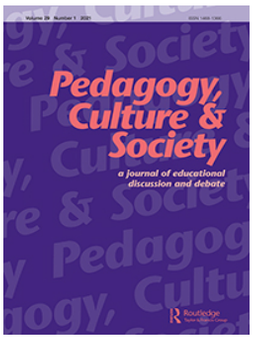

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Translanguaging through the lens of drama and digital storytelling: shaping new language pedagogies in the classroom

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ABSTRACT

This article investigates 'translanguaging' through the lens of drama and digital storytelling and the way it can impact on language pedagogy. The case-study focuses on the making of the digital story *Irene – A refugee's story*. The research data was analysed under key questions relating to drama, transformative pedagogy and translanguaging spaces. Research findings revealed how bringing drama and digital storytelling together allowed these young children to view themselves and the world differently and experience themselves as bidialectal learners. Children's translanguaging practices encouraged them to move beyond traditional pedagogic ideologies and to think more independently and creatively. These young children were able to think, discuss, explore and evaluate through both linguistic varieties of Cypriot Greek (CG) and Standard Modern Greek (SMG) and adopt translanguaging practices. The digital storytelling process was viewed as performative, self-reflective and transformative. The research study showed the importance of trying out new language pedagogies in the classroom.

KEYWORDS

Translanguaging; drama; digital storytelling; critical literacy; critical language awareness; transformative pedagogy

Introduction

This article presents collaborative research conducted by a primary school teacher/researcher whose expertise lies in the field of translanguaging in education; a drama practitioner/researcher whose background is in drama/theatre education; and a teacher educator/principal investigator of the wider research project with an interest in transformative pedagogy. The research explores how 7-year old children in a Greek Cypriot primary school begin to develop critical literacy and critical language awareness when spaces are opened up within the mainstream curriculum to use their full linguistic repertoire. We argue that, in order for children to become agentive in their expanded language learning, these experiences need to be framed within a pedagogical approach that seeks to value the languages, cultures and experiences of the children. Cummins (2000), in developing a framework for academic language learning within a model of transformative pedagogy identified the following 3 core elements as essential for a transformative orientation: 'critical literacy, critical language awareness and

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acting on social realities' (280). The research presented here engages with the theoretical perspectives of this pedagogical model and interrogates how drama can be viewed as transformative pedagogy in practice. Digital storytelling provides the context for this practice and allows children to think deeply about their language usage and experiment with different ways of doing things. This process of trying things out and constant experimentation, revision and reflection is viewed 'as the essence of successful Digital Storytelling' (Lambert 2017, 26).

Within a model of transformative pedagogy, translanguaging is used in this research study to understand the ways in which children make meaning across their linguistic repertoire. As this study is located in Cyprus, it is important to understand the highly political and contested linguistic context. The official languages of the Republic of Cyprus and the official languages in education are Greek and Turkish (Hadjioannou, Tsiplakou, and Kappler 2011), however, Turkish is only used in areas occupied by Turkey. Cypriot Greek (CG) is characterised as a dialect of Greek (Arvaniti 2006) and can be considered as a regional as well as historical dialect that belongs to the Southern dialects of Greece and is spoken by the 700,000 Greek Cypriots, by minority communities of Armenian and Maronite heritage in Cyprus, by a number of Turkish Cypriots (Papapavlou 2001) and by 300,000 Greek Cypriots in the diaspora.

In this article we use the term 'varieties of language practices' and not the term 'dialect' when we refer to bidialectal speakers who use either standard or non-standard ways of languaging (García 2009) since the term 'dialect' continues to foster social stigmatisation. Whilst Standard Modern Greek (SMG) is considered the language of power in education, media, administration and written code, the Cypriot Greek variety is the unofficial everyday language variety spoken by the majority of the population (Ioannidou 2009). We argue that making use of this dialect-standard continuum in Cypriot classrooms empowers young people as meaning makers and reflects the creative linguistic practices that Greek Cypriot students experience through translanguaging. This research adds new insights into language practices and extends notions of literacy and digital storytelling within a bidialectal context.

The case-study focuses on the making of the digital story *Irene – A refugee's story* and was part of an international digital storytelling project to enhance language learning and literacy in schools. The funded multilingual digital storytelling project (2012–17) involved over 30 lead teachers and schools (Algeria, Cyprus, England, Luxembourg, Palestine, Taiwan, United States) and over 1,500 young people, across primary and secondary age ranges (6–18 years old), in creating and sharing digital stories. The project included over 15 languages and we defined multilingual digital storytelling as a digital story (3–-5 minutes) in bilingual version made using photographs, moving images, artwork, objects and drama. The theme of belonging was chosen for the digital stories across all project schools in 2016–17. The lead teacher in Cyprus discovered an educational resource designed for 5–8 year olds on the website of the UNHRC United Nations Refugee Agency for Cyprus. This was an animated Greek adaptation of a German children's story, *Karlinchen* by Annegert Fuchshuber (1995). Her students engaged in watching part of the animated story about a young girl who is a refugee, but not the ending.

The 3 main research questions addressed in this article are:

(1) How can drama open up spaces for transformative pedagogy and expand notions of identity?
(2) In what ways does positioning digital storytelling within a transformative pedagogical framework lead to moments of critical language awareness?

(3) How do young children embody their languages, cultures and experiences through the process of translanguaging in the making of a digital story?

Theoretical perspectives

In this section we explore the key theoretical perspectives of transformative pedagogy, drama and translanguaging that underpinned the making of the digital story *Irene – A refugee's story*.

Transformative pedagogy

The pedagogical framework created to implement multilingual digital storytelling in schools was vital to its success. This pedagogical framework (Anderson and Macleroy 2016) embraced an integrated and inclusive approach to language and literacy and to the broader curriculum validating multilingualism and intentional translanguaging. Transformative pedagogy moved the project forward with a commitment to social justice and social action. In drawing on a transformative pedagogical approach to language learning and emerging literacies, questions of language and power were interrogated and learner agency actively promoted. Adopting a transformative pedagogical approach involved creating a space for learner agency and enabling students 'to relate curriculum content to their individual and collective experience and to analyse broader social issues relevant to their lives' (Cummins 2000, 246). Placing interactions between individual educators and students at the centre of the learning process recognised the importance of exploring alternative perspectives and negotiating identities. Phipps and Gonzalez (2004) recognise that language learning is about active meaning-making and that it is 'languaging with life that will cross classroom thresholds and be active in the work of culture' (86). Therefore, this entails reclaiming the decentred literacy practices and languages of marginalised cultures and researching literacy practices 'not as confined to bounded spaces, such as homes or schools, but as fluid trajectories of connected meanings and social practices that are continually moving, changing and unfolding in spaces' (Mills 2016, 106).

Transformative pedagogy seeks to develop learners' critical literacy and builds on the notion that educators and students have to take risks, experiment and imagine other ways of doing things: 'it is about desire and fear; how we construct them and how they construct us' (Janks 2010, 41). It takes courage to frame literacy through the lens of transformative pedagogies as this approach requires a deep level of thinking, criticality and creativity and an openness to uncertainty and a willingness to change. In the making of their digital stories, students were encouraged to develop critical and empathetic perspectives on belonging and constantly negotiate and collaborate on the construction of the narrative. Digital storytelling comes from a background of folk culture, experimental theatre and cultural activism and the strong belief that a healthy community is grounded in plurality, understanding and belonging: 'Being the author of your own life, of the way you move through the world, is a fundamental idea in democracy' (Lambert 2013, 2). In connecting digital storytelling with ideas of hope, justice and compassion, digital stories are viewed as providing an alternative narrative that is seen in terms of 'social engagement, participation, activism and change, it is not simply "story for story's sake"' (Hartley 2017, 220). Storytelling has the potential to enhance readers' humanity and play an important 'cultural role in the construction of mature empathic individuals' (Pereira and Campos 2014, 368) through seeking to understand the

story's messages and narrative point of view. Stories can help children to learn empathy and be able to 'empathise even with characters whose emotions they do not recognise directly' (Nikolajeva 2012, 289). Children's literature (even books for very young readers) is now viewed as an important forum for dealing with traumatic conflicts and dark emotions: 'opportunities for young people to gain insights into themselves and those around them that may have positive long-term social and emotional benefits' (Reynolds 2010, 89).

Transformative pedagogy is deeply collaborative and knowledge is generated through experiential, personal, critical and creative phases of learning rather than a narrow focus on the literal. The Critical Connections project worked across sites of learning, but perceived schools as basecamps for transformative pedagogy and young people as storytellers and innovators (PHF and Innovation Unit 2012). Young people engaged with digital technology to compose their alternative narratives and worked collaboratively to present strong messages of resistance and hope. The digital element of digital storytelling allows young people to make meaning through interconnecting words and images, framing a narrative viewpoint, using space, controlling the pace of the narrative and beginning to understand how the moving image 'unfolds in time' (Bezemer and Kress 2008, 182). They explored themes of fairness and belonging through a project-based approach to language learning that fostered learner agency and multilingualism. Drama became a more integral part of the project as we moved from a focus on personal stories of identity (theme of inside out in 2012–13) to explore ideas of social justice (theme of belonging in 2016–17).

A core element of transformative pedagogy is the desire to act on social realities and make a difference. The 7-year-old children in this research were given the opportunity to engage with the complex and controversial issue of migration and explore its emotional significance thinking about how this issue mattered to them. The digital storytelling process was viewed as performative, self-reflective and transformative as young children were able to explore the emotional and social significance of being a refugee and develop a 'sense of being social subjects who can inquire into and act upon the world' (Rose 2017, 186).

Drama as transformative pedagogy in practice

In viewing drama as transformative pedagogy in practice, we recognise the potential of drama to empower young children in their language learning and digital storytelling. Drama can be seen as the most communal of art forms requiring participation and co-operation to take place (Winston and Tandy 2001). Neelands (2009) interrogates this notion of togetherness: 'Drama and Theatre is the quintessential social art form and this quality is also essential to its educational uses. People must come together in order to make and to share in its makings. It is the art of togetherness even if much of its content and form is about representing un-togetherness' (9). Approaching the project dramatically enabled students to work closely with each other to create work around a deeply controversial social issue such as migration. The performative element also helped the students come closer and work together. This is because students shared the common aim of creating a digital story that in the end would be shared with an external audience.

The transformative orientation of drama fosters possible re-workings in the power relations between educators and students. Applying drama to the making of *Irene – A refugee's story* changed the roles of the teacher and researcher to facilitators and participants in the drama world. This transformative process happened through the

drama conventions employed, the drama games played and, most importantly, the use of improvisation in the early stages of working with the initial story in the process of familiarisation with the digital form and the actual making of the story in the Sculpture Park. Gallagher (2010) expands on the value of improvisation by stating that improvisation as an art form is unique in that it allows us 'simply to live inside an imagined context to see what we could learn together' (43). This is also true in the language teaching and learning that took place with the specific group taking part in the project; it was a commitment for us to allow students to move freely between Cypriot Greek and Modern Standard Greek throughout the project.

The imaginary *as if worlds* we create in theatre, a necessary precondition for drama to happen, give room for alternative narratives to be built and the imagining of different ways of being. 'We learn through experience and experiencing … and if the individual permits it, the environment will teach him/her everything it has to teach' (Spolin 1963, 3). The dual realities, the real and the fictional, created by the participants in drama have the potential to affect both the way the environment and the individual influence what is experienced. The focus, in drama, is on the experience of the participants and on their capacity to work together both in and out of role (Nicholson 2005). This in its turn enables participants to juxtapose different perspectives, to fictionalise life as they experience it and alternatively, to make the imaginary world tangible and real. Thus, the definition of the *environment* in drama, of the space and the place within which everything is happening can be more fluid and belong in the hands of the participants. At the same time, drama represents a space in which participants play and learn, and dramatic play is about experiencing freedom. Players play, imagining together and this 'matters too much', as through fantasy we can explore the freedom which is necessary for spiritual regeneration and for seeking alternatives to our realities (Zipes cited in Charalambous 2013, 76). Ultimately the freedom to act and think differently within these microcosms can affect identity formation and self-realisation, both of which are fundamental to transformative pedagogy. In other words *living in dramatic worlds* allows the students both to experience situations other than their own and to reflect on these experiences. Instances where this process was evident can be found in the data analysis, below.

Approaching drama as transformative pedagogy within the context of digital storytelling enables an interrogation of the meaning-making potential of these two processes – drama and digital storytelling – and an examination of what happens when they are brought together. Alrutz, who has written extensively on digital storytelling as an applied theatre praxis, suggests that such an approach could offer participants 'an opportunity to reflect and archive (re)vision and (re)construct complex notions of (their) identity, culture and community' (2013, 45). This interdisciplinary praxis with its emphasis on the process and not so much on the final digital product, uses elements of theatre and performance as tools to explore questions of identity.

Translanguaging within transformative pedagogy

Underpinning perspectives on language learning in the project was a repertoire approach which validated and created spaces for creative discursive practices through translanguaging. Translanguaging is defined here as the multiple linguistic practices used by bilingual speakers in order to enhance the meaning-making process (García 2009). In adopting the

theoretical framework of translanguaging, we have embraced the assumption that languages are not separated and isolated; languages are used for communication; and local language practices are used while negotiating communication (Canagarajah 2011). If educators are to adopt a transformative orientation to language learning in schools, children's complex languaging practices need to be used to develop their standard academic language and create linguistically meaningful and flexible schools (García 2009). In our case, what makes linguistic interactions complex is the fact that certain discursive practices cannot easily be assigned to one code or another. For example, the use of the terms 'standard' and 'non-standard' imply the existence of *'clearly identifiable linguistic codes'* (Yiakoumetti and Esch 2010, 294). This is true for certain cases where the standard and the non-standard dialects are so different from each other that the variation in people's speech can be considered as changing between different systems (Yiakoumetti and Esch 2010). That is why Cyprus' linguistic setting is perceived as complex and thus we investigate students' interactions under the spectrum of translanguaging as a more dynamic notion characterised by interrelational linguistic functions (García 2009). García (2009) used the term translanguaging to move beyond code-switching and place more emphasis on the language practices of bilinguals viewing language use from the perspective of the speakers rather than just from the viewpoint of the language itself (García 2009; Creese and Blackledge 2010). By drawing on the full range of their available linguistic repertoire, bilingual students are able to use complex discursive practices to acquire knowledge and therefore enhance their learning (Garcia, Flores, and Woodely 2012). Translanguaging accepts the idea of language as a medium of contact between bilinguals or others who have multiple discursive practices. In the case of Cyprus, language varieties work on a language continuum with no linguistic boundaries and within a multiple discursive linguistic context.

Translanguaging is seen as active, fluid and empowering. For Li Wei (2010), translanguaging draws from the psycholinguistic notion of languaging (an active process of negotiation and meaning making) related to the idea of using language to achieve understanding, to gain knowledge and to communicate. Li Wei (2018, 15) recognises the transformative power of translanguaging:

> Translanguaging is conceived as a practice and a process – a practice that involves dynamic and integrated use of different languages and language varieties but most importantly a process of knowledge construction that goes beyond language(s).

Li Wei (2010) also referred to translanguaging space. This space is created through multilingual speakers' social context or environment where they draw on their personal experiences, their beliefs, their history as well as on their individual cognitive skills to create meaning. Translanguaging space has no fixed boundaries since new identities, beliefs and linguistic practices are constantly combined and new ones produced (Li Wei 2010). Hence, it can be characterised by creativity since it enables the individual to move beyond the official standard uses of language and create an expanded linguistic mode outside the boundaries of the conventional and appropriate. Li Wei also argued that the combination of such linguistic practices within the translanguaging space can be creative and critical.

In the Cypriot context, speakers socialise across different linguistic contexts by creating translanguaging spaces using their linguistic varieties, their history, and personal views to communicate and acquire meaning (Stavrou 2016). During the research project, students

created their own linguistic means of communication in the classroom by using any linguistic resource available to negotiate the meanings of the story, narrate it and dramatise it. It was considered appropriate for translanguaging to occur as it was a pedagogical tool that allowed engagement, flexibility in linguistic actions, and fostered students' metalinguistic awareness. Therefore, translanguaging was used as a linguistic process during which both the teacher and the learner were empowered and teaching included the full expression of students' intercultural experiences and linguistic repertoires. Translanguaging emphasises the multiple ways of transferring meanings through words and highlights the importance of experience, feelings and culture (Li Wei 2018). We move beyond bounded conceptualisations of words to argue that the linguistic continuum of speech with linguistic features in Cypriot Greek (in phonology, morphology, lexicon) is considered translanguaging in the Cypriot linguistic context. We argue that these three linguistic features mirror creative uses of language as students manipulated words in Cypriot Greek in a way that became indistinguishable from Standard Modern Greek and, at the same time, gave rise to opportunities for transformation of their thinking.

We drew on our combined knowledge and experience of the field (transformative pedagogy, drama and translanguaging) to implement the digital storytelling project in the Greek-Cypriot context.

A critical ethnographic and action research approach

The wider research project aimed at connecting children with language learning and fostering a deeper more critical engagement with digital technology. The project ran counter to many school practices that marginalise multilingual learners, languages, language varieties and creative uses of digital technology. Social justice was a core principle in our research and fundamental to this was adopting a critical stance towards learning and a research methodology that embraced both the pedagogical and political. Critical ethnography was chosen as the overarching methodology as our research needed to be collaborative, to interrogate educational issues in relation to language learning, and to make a difference. This meant that, as well as developing an ethnographic research paradigm (qualitative, context-based, participatory, multi-perspectival and interpretive approach), we also sought to develop a more critical approach to our work. Within this critical ethnographic research paradigm we linked our study to ecological, collaborative and multimodal perspectives (Anderson and Macleroy 2016). In aligning our research to a critical ethnographic approach, we recognised that our research should raise questions about whose interests are served by the research and whether the research study can challenge injustices and lead to change. Critical ethnographers working in the field of education seek to expose and understand these inequalities in our school systems asking 'why things are the way they are and what must be done for things to be otherwise' (Simon and Dippo 1986, 196).

Transformative practice was placed at the centre of our digital storytelling work and the desire to foster new ways of doing things. The research process was a collaborative and dialogic process that involved lead teachers and researchers in the shaping of each stage of the project. Action research, an element of the research design and, in common with critical ethnography, founded on the 'belief that teachers as participants within an education system have a right to question that system and the values for which it stands and develop alternative models' (Anderson and Macleroy 2016, 137). Media training for lead teachers

and students was an integral part of the research design and developing ways to work across languages and language varieties. Action research may involve new ways of teachers and students working together and this 'process is most empowering when undertaken collaboratively' (Bigum, Henry, and Kemmis 1986, 9). The 7-year-old children in the case-study presented here worked collaboratively with the primary teacher/researcher and drama practitioner/researcher and helped shape the process through their decision making, problem solving and experimentation. This process-oriented research approach opened up new spaces for self-reflective enquiry for the participants and the potential to contribute to personal motivation and development (Reason and Marshall 1987).

Data were collected from class work, students' video work at home, rehearsals, the final video, the presentation that the participants gave to their parents/guardians and other members of the school and the students' own reflections captured in short videos.

Context of study

This article analyses the data collected from a primary school in a village in South-Eastern Cyprus in the non-occupied area of Famagusta. Specifically, it examined the language practices of one of the two Year 2 classrooms which consisted of 14 Cypriot students, 9 girls and 5 boys, aged 7. All parents agreed for their children to participate in the digital storytelling project and appear in the film; to be recorded and observed; and all students had the right to withdraw. The project was implemented in the school after gaining permission from the headteacher and the Cyprus Ministry of Education and Culture.

Digital storytelling was integrated into a thematic unit that was part of Standard Modern Greek Language lessons. Students had to create a story around the theme of belonging. The curriculum content was taught through activities related to story making. The thematic approach followed the official language curriculum objectives with an emphasis on the production of narrative oral language skills. It also examined cultural perspectives on refugees and migration as well as diversity (issues that are also explored in Life and Health Education included in the curriculum of primary education). Students were engaged in various indoor and outdoor activities which included language, drama and digital literacy, over a period of 7 months (October 2016 – April, 2017). Lessons around storytelling and digital literacy were undertaken at least twice per week during Greek Language or Life and Health Education lessons.

Digital literacy lessons included media training so that students could use cameras and successfully produce their own camera shots. Also, students became familiar with different types of camera shots though several practical and theoretical practices. In building on a thematic approach, the students' ideas about belonging were transformed into a touching story about a young refugee girl named 'Irene' who had to leave her home after it was burnt down and begin a long and tiring journey to find a new place to stay. The story about Irene was chosen as a narrative vehicle for the part of the curriculum that explores issues around refugees. This narrative was also used because the notion of 'belonging' in this specific story was strongly connected with local emotions after the 1974 invasion by Turks of the island and the illegal possession of the north part of Cyprus. The story was firstly introduced digitally as students watched the video of Irene. However, the teacher stopped the story just before the last scene so that students could think and

create their own and different endings to the story. The digital story was shot at the Sculpture Park in Ayia Napa in Cyprus. This was decided after an educational school excursion to the park. During that period students were engaged in an ongoing process of finding a possible ending to the story and thus an imaginative place where Irene could stay. At the park, students started providing the teacher with ideas as regards to places that Irene could find shelter. The idea of Irene seeking a home at the sculpture park fascinated students and increased their level of participation as it was a process undertaken outside the boundaries of a traditional classroom.

Research findings and discussion

The data was brought together under the 3 key research questions relating to drama and identity, digital storytelling, and translanguaging. The organisation of data by research questions 'draws together all the relevant data for the exact issue of concern to the researcher, and preserves the coherence of the material' (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison 2018, 662). The following themes were highlighted through the research questions: (a) drama and 'becoming', (b) moments of critical language awareness, and (c) translanguaging within transformative pedagogy. In addition a new, more unexpected theme was also identified relating to the emergence of (d) intentional translanguaging.

Drama and 'becoming'

In relation to the question about how drama can open up spaces for transformative pedagogy and expand notions of identity, we examined data that related to what children can learn from a process-based performance about themselves, others and the world.

During the presentation of the whole project from the students to their parents and other members of the school, the headteacher in her short introductory speech to the parents expressed the idea that parents should be proud of their children's creativity.

Excerpt 1: Headteacher's Speech

> Because children are capable of doing big things not only small, big, very big even though we, the adults don't often realise it; and it's these things that help them develop themselves.

What the headteacher was suggesting was also expressed by Watkins and Russo in placing participants' narratives in conversation with larger community and societal debates through the production and performance of a digital story and the presentation, dissemination and reflection on it (cited in Alrutz 2013). The headteacher was stating that the participants went beyond themselves in this project or beyond what is normally expected. Despite the very young age of the participants, they were able to express their ideas about important issues relevant to our lives such as migration, racism and refugees. Nicholson posits that in re-telling stories, the 'speaker does not relive events but re-writes them' (2005, 90). In our case the re-telling of the story of Irene happened collectively and gave the participants the opportunity to re-imagine together another future and allowed them on the micro level of their class to act on their social realities; something that is at the heart of transformative pedagogy (Cummins 2000).

Looking at our data, there were a series of incidents that supported the above arguments. After an introductory lesson on how to use the camera and on the different

angles they could shoot each scene, the students were asked to experiment with video-recording at home, if they wanted, with their own tablets. Most of the students showed great interest in this activity and started bringing back to class their short videos. One particular student recorded this 2-minute video in Greek, presenting her ideas about the story of Irene.

Excerpt 2: Self Recorded Scene

> Irene is a child like us but a bit different. I am sure Irene can find a house full of many things. The Poor People … I have a question … why did the Poor People didn't accept her as she is also a little poor girl; the greedy people why do they do this thing? It's a pity to throw to the garbage the leftovers from food. How is it possible their dogs to eat what is left over? It's better to give some to Irene. In this way Irene can be a happy child like us. I am sure Irene will find a life and she will live happily (pause). Although in reality Irene could be an older child or a younger child. Even if she is eighteen years old, I feel sorry for her. It's better if she can live a life like us with love, joy and kindness. The video that our teacher showed us … we learned a lot from that. We learned a lot and new words from that like the little tree we have in our classroom. These are things about Irene. We can … our teacher is a very good teacher that taught us many new things. What we are learning about Irene is very important. For this we need to say a very big bravo to our teacher that tried and did all of these (S).

The girl, in her short monologue, was reflecting both on the story and on the work done. On one level she exhibits great empathy for Irene, identifies the problem in people's actions and ideas, presents solutions and expresses her hope for a better future. The dramatic exploration of the story at this point gave the students the opportunity to step into Irene's shoes and to observe her life. The girl's reflections convey the sense of empathy for the character that is developing. On a second level, the girl evaluates the new knowledge and effort made by her teacher as very important, indicative of the value she places on the theme explored.

In a similar way the students had the opportunity to reflect on the whole project by recording short scenes commenting on given questions in order to promote their work and digital story. Their answers are significant in showing the act of *meta-thinking* on their work, themselves and the process. Their responses below are evident, not only of how each student deciphered the story, but also of their reasoning in relation to what they learned and what was important to state in order to promote the importance of their work.

Excerpt 3: Self Recorded Scene- Reviewing

> The end is a bit confusing. What happened? Was she asleep and she woke up? (T)
>
> No she wasn't asleep. Her life was a reality. She wandered around and found her parents (S6).
>
> Irene passed through so many villages and nobody helped her in this adventure she was going through (S12).
>
> Irene didn't give up. She went on until she found her parents (S7).
>
> I would like to add that Irene was very sad and that fear never left her [he means at the end] (S10.)

In focusing on the leading role of drama in this project and in its efficacy in producing possible transformations in participants' behaviours and sense of identities, we applied Neelands' arguments about the preconditions that allow such transformations. Neelands

suggests that personal and social transformations are most likely to happen within drama when there is an expectation that drama will be used to explore and critique the social world. Thus he proposes a *para-aesthetic approach* to drama that will lift any boundaries between the social and the artistic and that will place aesthetic learning within the social sphere (Neelands 2004, 51). In this specific case educators were committed to engaging the students in learning by focusing on the complex issue of belonging. The girl's self-shot scene after the first drama workshop and the short reflective scenes by the groups after watching their final video are denotative of a kind of self-development; commenting on social reality, having opinions and posing arguments. Furthermore, another precondition for personal transformation posed by Neelands is the structuring of a pedagogic context that 'stresses "becoming", that sees students as human "becomings" rather than "beings", that views human potentiality as a project rather than as an essentialised and contained given' (53). This view is also captured in the headteacher's view of the young children as capable of doing *big things* and therefore in a state of constantly developing and forming themselves.

There was a defining moment which is denotative of the agentive moments that were observed throughout the project and that related to the idea of 'becoming'. The students started working with the story of Irene in their classroom exploring the story dramatically following conventions such as role on the wall, hot seating, short improvisations to get to know the story better and meeting the central character. Irene, the protagonist of the story, was walking from place to place asking for some food and water but the people she was meeting were not welcoming. During a school excursion a few days later the students went to visit a Sculpture Park in Famagusta. Then one of the students approached the teacher and said that Irene may have come in this park as well to ask for food and water. Other students agreed and a discussion sparked amongst them and amongst the teachers and researchers. What happened was that the students guided us to transfer the action and the story outside the school. The power of the story and the power of the students' imaginations together created another world that was both physically and mentally outside the school arena and this forced us to find a way to accommodate this idea. Other students found this equally interesting demonstrating that very young learners can make decisions and value other people's ideas to develop a good story. More importantly it is also a sign that, if students are encouraged, they can define and change the courses of action to what and how they are learning.

As a last precondition for drama's power to transform as discussed by Neelands, is a suggestion that acting 'differently', acting 'as if' allows participants to explore and discover that they are potentially free to renegotiate and transform images of self and others (Neelands 2004, 54). By taking on the different roles – of Irene, of the people she meets in the initial story, of the Enchanted Sculptures in the new world and of the storytellers – the participants were in a position to go beyond themselves and this was, in a way, a small act of transformation. The imagined reality that the participants built allowed them to be other than themselves for a while, to see and act on things differently, and this opportunity moved them a bit further from what they were. Following Alrutz who examines what embodied and mediated performances can teach learners through bringing digital media and drama together, we focused on building a collaborative project that engaged very young people in creating a piece of work that allowed them to see

themselves perform and be performed (Alrutz 2013; 2015) and this affected their language development as well.

Moments of critical language awareness

This section of the data analysis focuses on the question of students' emerging critical language use within a transformative pedagogical framework. The data provides examples of how students acquired critical language awareness with regards to the two linguistic varieties of Cypriot Greek (CG) and Modern Standard Greek (SMG) while framing their digital storytelling. The patterns that emerged through the data show how students focussed on language use and explored the relationship between SMG and CG encompassing aspects of language and power. At the same time their language awareness was cultivated through critical thinking. Students negotiate the status of CG variety and SMG and participate effectively in order to elucidate ideas regarding what language they will use in their story and why the one is 'better' than the other.

The students had to provide a different ending to the story of Irene. During Irene's journey to find her parents she passed through different 'countries'. These countries were represented by a sculpture found at the Sculpture Park in Agia Napa, Cyprus. The following discussion happened while students were discussing whether they would use CG in their film and specifically for the scene of Irene visiting the 'Land of the twin Hippos'. The scene was considered significant since it was the one for which students chose to use CG along with SMG. In the following excerpts, SMG is underlined, CG features are in bold, common features of both linguistic codes are non-bold and English loanwords are in italics.

Excerpt 4: Moments of Laughing

1	S9	Κυρία **εν** θα ήταν ωραία να σε τραβά κάποιος με την *κάμερα* **τζαι** να **λαλείς 'τζαι'**… Mrs it **wouldn't** be nice someone to record you with the *camera* **and say** "**tze**"[and]
2	S3	Να **λαλείς «ήντα μπου** θέλεις **κόρη**…» S**ay "what do you** want **girl**…"
3	T	Γιατί; **Εν** υπάρχουν σειρές στα κυπριακά στην τηλεόραση; Why? **Aren't** there any TV series in Cypriot?
4	ALL	Υπάρχουν. There are.
5	T	**E** γιατί εμείς να **μεν** το **κάμναμεν;** **So** why should**n't we do** it?
6	S10	Κυρία στα ελληνικά μπορεί μιαν λέξη να **μεν** την ξέρουμε να την **πούμεντε** σωστά στα ελληνικά **τζαι** να την πούμε κυπριακά **τζαι** να νιώσουμε άσχημα επειδή **εν** να την πούμε στον άλλον κάπως διαφορετικά Mrs in Greek maybe we **do not** know [how] to **say** a word correctly in Greek **and** say it in Cypriot **and** feel bad because we will say it to the other [person] somehow differently.
7	S9	**Εν** γίνεται να πούμε **τες** εκατό λέξεις στα ελληνικά **τζαι** μια κυπριακή, **εν** να χαλάσει το βίντεο We **cannot** say (speak) [**a**] hundred words in Greek **and** one Cypriot [word]. **It will** destroy the video.

Students expressed embarrassment in relation to their home language which did not seem appropriate or nice to them for use within their story (line 1). In line 2 S3 uses CG intentionally to confer legitimacy to that way of talking in front of a camera. The teacher tries to engage students critically in this conversation and to provoke deeper understandings of language choices by asking students (in lines 3 and 5) why they shouldn't use the CG since it is used in a Cypriot TV series and thus gains

a wider audience. So S10 in line 6 said that if they do not know a specific word in SMG then they would have to use a word in CG and that this translanguaging practice would make them feel bad. In line 7, S9 confirmed that the use of CG would 'ruin' the video stating her own criteria as regards to the linguistic content of their video. Here, students were discussing intentional translanguaging and such discussions open up spaces for becoming critical towards the use of SMG along with CG.

During several conversations and negotiations the teacher and the students agreed to include one scene using CG. While students were continuing to evaluate the scene with Irene talking to the Hippo, S7 asked to listen to the dialogue again (line 1). S7 also added they were not ashamed to listen to him speak CG. So the teacher satisfied his request in line 2. Once they heard CG students started laughing, making fun of the linguistic choice. S7 was a year older than the rest of the students and very often acted as the leader of the class. He felt confident in himself using CG; the next excerpt shows how he created a space for using CG in the classroom as well

1	S7	Κυρία γιατί **εν** μας **βάλλεις** τα λόγια; **Εν αντρεπούμαστεν** Mrs, why **don't** you **"put us"** [can't we listen to] the words? **We are not ashamed.**
2	T	Να το, σιωπή [Ακούν τα λόγια του ιποπόταμου: «**Νάμπου γυρεύκεις δαμέ**;» γελούν δυνατά] Here it is, silence [they listen to the words of the Hippo: "**What do you want here?"** and they laugh loudly].

as in the film.

Excerpt 5: Moments of laughing

Such data manifest the unequal power relations in language use that exist in the local context. It is clear that SMG was considered the powerful and 'official' language implying that it should be used in the film while words in CG should not be used at all. Students were actually offering their opinion and critique moments in the film by using both of their linguistic varieties. Over time students realised the legitimacy of both of their language options and became aware of the different ways they could express their ideas and opinions.

Translanguaging within transformative pedagogy

Data included in this part of the analysis relates to the research question about how young children embody their languages, cultures and experiences through the process of translanguaging in the making of a digital story. Cummins' (2000) theoretical framework for transformative pedagogy was applied to the data analysis to focus on students' literacy development as well as to present the ways the teacher and the students generated knowledge in a community of learning through collaborative critical inquiry. Students analysed and understood the content of the story as well as the social phenomenon of migration through the theme of 'belonging' by relating it to their own experiences and, therefore, to their story. Most importantly, during the collaborative construction of literacy and creation of knowledge students were given the opportunity to express themselves through translanguaging.

Creative narratives through translanguaging

Excerpt 6: Discussion of a possible ending of the story

1	T	Ξαφνικά, βρέθηκε στη χώρα των "Φοβισμένων Προσφύγων". Αντίκρισε τους γονείς της και τι είπε; Suddenly, she found herself in the land of the "Scared Refugees". She faced her parents and what did she say?
2	S7	Μαμά **παπά**… Mum, **dad**…
3	T	Σε τι [κατάσταση] βρίσκονταν οι γονείς της; Πείτε μου In what [situation] were her parents? Tell me.
4	S3	Μπορεί οι γονείς της, **που** η S9 **εστάθηκε τζιαμέ τζαι έκλαιε**, το **δάκρυον** να πάει **πας** τους γονείς της **τζαι** να **ξηπαγώσουν τζαι** να γίνουν φυσιολογικοί άνθρωποι Perhaps her parents, **when** S9 **stood there and was crying**, the **tear** went **on** her parents **and** they **unfroze and** became normal people.
5	T	Τι ωραίο **τούτο** που είπες! [χειροκροτούν] Άρα ο S3 μας έδωσε μια τρομερή ιδέα. Ότι το δάκρυ της τους ξύπνησε ενώ αυτή νόμιζε πως είχανε πάει στον ουρανό. How nice is **what** you said [they clap].So S3 gave us a great idea. That her tear woke them up while she thought that they went to the sky [died].
6	S6	**Τζαι αρκεύκαν τζαι γκριζίζαν**, μετά **αρκέψαν εν** άσπροι, μετά μπεζ, μετά μπεζ **εγινησκούνταν, εγινησκούντασιν** **And they started and were turning grey**, then started [turning] **are** white, then beige, then beige they were **becoming, becoming.**
7	T	**Αλλάζασιν** χρώμα; **Did they change** colour?
8	S6	Ναι, **εξηπαγώνασιν, εφανήκαν τζαι** τα πόδια της **τζαι εν να** κρατούσαν χέρια **τζαι** να **πηαίνασιν** στο σπίτι τους Yes, they were **unfreezing, and** her legs **appeared and** they **would** hold hands **and were going** home.
9	S3	Όμως κυρία **εν** να **γίνηκε** ένα θαύμα. **Ούλλα** τα αγάλματα να **ξηπαγώσουν** But Mrs a miracle must have **happened. All** the statues to **unfreeze**
10	S7	Αφού το σπίτι της **επόμπαρε** [interrupts] But her house was **bombed**

The teacher read the final scene/part of the story to the students. During this reading, the teacher stopped and asked questions to make students co-writers of the story.

Students engaged in narrative exchanges using both SMG and CG to create literature and explore issues relevant to belonging as well as to negotiate the end of their story and their heroine's journey. Though students initially expressed embarrassment about the nature of their home language (CG), they actually used it as a communicative and thinking resource in the normal life of the classroom. In line 4, S3 tried to answer the teacher's question with a creative response through translanguaging. The student manipulated language in his own way by 'creating' his own words (eg, dakrion- tear) and by translanguaging to create his imaginative scene. The students seized the opportunity to develop more complex thinking and offered a possible end to the story. The teacher in line 5 applauded his effort while accepting S3's creative use of language. In line 6 and line 8, S6 assisted this collaborative construction of narrative and offered his own end to the story. S6 actually created an imaginative scene through translanguaging. He expressed himself through a unique linguistic utterance that involved translanguaging in motion; a motion of thinking that included unbounded linguistic imagination (see Figure 1). An imagination that was enhanced within a translanguaging space of words that showed transformation (eg. grizizan- turning grey, eginiskountasin- were becoming). The teacher, in line 7, asked for clarification but at the same time created a legitimate space for

translanguaging to continue. Students' created a translanguaging space that was characterised by an expanded linguistic mode containing creativity and criticality (Li Wei

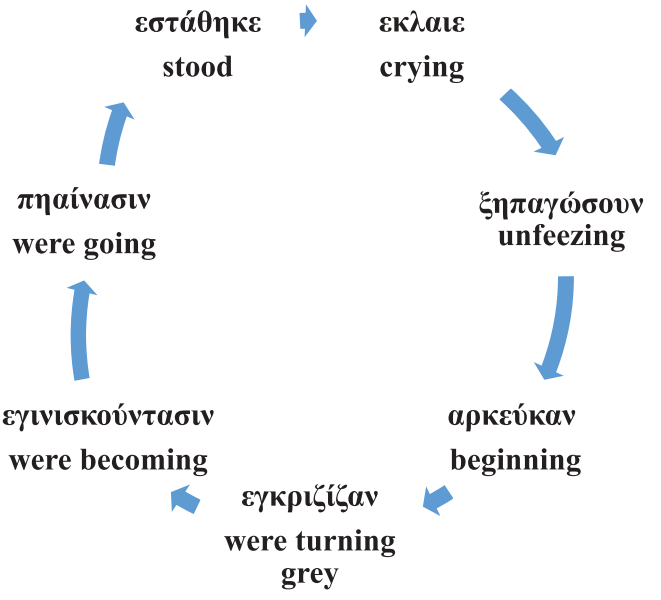

Figure 1. Translanguaging in motion.

2010). While S3 continued to provide the teacher with his ideas, S7 in line 10 was translanguaging to question S6's idea about going home at the end of the story since their home was destroyed.

This particular excerpt represents one of the most important creative moments that students experienced linguistically and mentally. Such original statements, facilitated by a pedagogy that enabled students to manipulate language freely, enabled them – not only to engage in complex thinking activities but also to develop confidence in self-expression. Creating and making decisions about their story or pieces of their story empowered the students as writers and as active members of a community of learning since the teacher had allowed them to be creative drawing on all of their available linguistic resources.

Translanguaging and critiquing

The following excerpts show how students were constantly stimulated and mentally active. The stimulation is evident in their active engagement in the lesson through questioning, challenging, decision making and collaborative problem solving (Cummins 2000).

The teacher wrote the last scene on the whiteboard as she negotiated the ending with her students. Different possible endings were given for the story. So, in line with students' recommendations, it was decided to vote on which ending to give their story. S2 (line 1) insisted on using the end that most of the students had rejected – that Irene would also freeze beside her parents. Students then discussed it.

Excerpt 7: Deciding the last scene

1	S2	Άρα να βάλουμε ότι **τζιείνο** που **εν** να την πετρώσει **τζαι τζιείνη** So we should use **the one** that she **will also** turn **her** into stone.
2	S1	Μα **εν** θα **εν** ωραίο… But **it** will **not** be nice…
3	S9	Κυρία μα **είσσιε** πολλά δυσάρεστα, **εν** να **εν τζαι** το τέλος; But Mrs [the story] **had** a lot of unpleasant things, **does it** have be the end [unpleasant] **as well**?
4	S6	Κυρία πρέπει να δούμε πρώτα να βάλουμε, ας πούμε, πού **εν** να **πάσιν** να ζήσουν; Mrs we have to see first to put, let's say, where they **will go** to live?

Students commented on the possible ending and developed their own ideas about it. They collaboratively constructed the story in ways that might seem surprising from 7-year-olds. They offered their opinions and challenged each other's proposals, but at the same time they manifested active participation and constructive engagement. Their exploratory talk was enhanced through translanguaging. All members' contributions were respected and all views and statements were carefully evaluated; disputes were avoided and the group sought mutual agreement before decisions were taken (Mercer 2010). Creative communicative spaces were developed that supported exploratory talk as well as collaborative reasoning.

Emergence of intentional translanguaging

A significant pattern that emerged through the data was that students were intentionally translanguaging in specific communicative moments to evaluate and provide alternative and enriched narratives. The following data fragment provides data that shows students' translanguaging as an intentional linguistic practice. We define intentional translanguaging as a process during which the students consciously decide which linguistic variety to use according to particular communicative purposes.

This excerpt shows how intentional translanguaging was used by students when processing the story and developing their ideas.

Excerpt 8: Intentional translanguaging during creative thinking

1	S11	Έκατσε σε μια πέτρα **τζαι εγονάτισε τζαι έκαμε** την προσευχή της **τζαι** είπε: «Θεέ μου μακάρι να είναι καλά οι γονείς μου, εγώ δεν θα τα παρατήσω» She [Irene] sat on a stone **and kneeled and said** her prayer **and** said 'God I wish my parents are well, I will not give up'.
2	S2	Κυρία, «η Ειρήνη βρήκε τους γονείς και έκλαιγε γιατί είχαν παγώσει, είχαν γίνει πέτρα και ξαφνικά οι γονείς της ξύπνησαν και της είπαν: Ποια είσαι;» Mrs, 'Irene found her parents and she was crying because they were frozen, they became stone and suddenly her parents woke up and told her: who are you?'

In line 1 S11 is translanguaging to provide the context of the story; once she steps into the heroine's role she deliberately uses SMG to narrate Irene's words. The same feature is presented in line 2 where S2 used SMG to offer her own narrative ending of the story. None of the students chose to use CG variety while students were creating their

imaginative texts in SMG. Students were actually using SMG intentionally when taking the role of the heroine (Irene) or when becoming narrators.

Excerpt 9: Translanguaging in action

1	S7	Δεν μου άρεσε που η Ειρήνη **εκουνιέτουν** συνέχεια I didn't like that Irene **was moving** all the time.
2	S9	Κουνιόταν! [τονίζει στα ελληνικά καθώς γράφουν] Was moving! [points out the word in SMG while writing].
3	S2	Να γράψουμε ότι **παρατηρούμεντε**… τι μας άρεσε, τι δεν μας άρεσε; Let's write that we observe … what we liked, what we didn't like.
4	S7	**A** S2… ησυχία **Hey** S2 … quiet.
5	S2	**Εν εν αφτούμενο αήστε** το [recorder] **It's not on. Leave** it [μαγνητόφωνο].
6	S9	**Δουλεύκει κόρη** **It's working girl.**
7	S14	**Εν αφτούμενο, εν αφτούμενο** **It's on, it's on.**
8	S2	Να γράψουμε, παρατηρούμε τι μας άρεσε και τι δεν μας άρεσε Let's write, we observe what we liked and what we didn't like.

Students worked in groups to write their evaluation of a scene they had just observed. A legitimate linguistic space was created behind and in front of the recorder that enabled the use of any linguistic resource in order to create, transform, analyse, discuss and produce/write their evaluation. The following excerpts show how students actually intentionally planned which language to use in front of the recorder while translanguaging to offer explanations as they were unsure if the recorder was on.

In line 1, S7 stated his opinion through a moment of translanguaging as regards to what he did not like in the specific scene that they were evaluating. In line 2, S9 'corrects' S7 by providing the word he used in CG in SMG and thus using a conventionalised pattern of response that was created according to the context that the student found himself in (Schleppegrell 2001); to produce a text according the school demands while also being recorded when afterwards the same student uses CG (line 6) to provide his oral statement. In line 3, S2 provided her opinion using a word in CG variety, then S7 (line 4) tells her to be quiet, showing her the recorder. Then a dispute in CG begins whether the recorder was on or not. When S14 decides that the recorder is on, S2 repeats her previous opinion switching code and using only SMG. This evidence demonstrates the intentional use of a specific linguistic variety. Multimedia tools actually gave the students a voice; a voice that was part of a role. This performative role enhanced language awareness. The students tried to present content and structure their text through the linguistic choices that would make their text a legitimate piece of writing in the eyes of official educational demands. Moreover, students used both varieties according to the social purpose of the moment (whether the recorder was on or not); translanguaging each time was therefore integral to the learning process. Students were seeking a legitimate space for using any linguistic variety so that they could negotiate how to construct the type of text that was valued at school.

Conclusion

In reflecting on the main research findings from this case study in a Greek Cypriot primary school, we were constantly surprised by the deep level of engagement in the drama and digital storytelling process demonstrated by these 7-year old children and how new spaces for language learning were opened up and transformed. We raised the question of how drama could create spaces for transformative pedagogy and to interrogate identity. By focusing on specific instances in the research data, we realised how drama could be seen as a transformative pedagogy in practice and how this could potentially affect students' ideas about themselves, others and the world. This engagement in performing a role, telling a story and using digital technology encouraged students to interrogate complex ideas of belonging. In bringing together drama and digital storytelling we set the base both for students to view themselves and the world differently and to experience themselves as bidialectal beings.

We examined the ways in which positioning digital storytelling within a transformative pedagogical framework led to moments of critical language awareness. As a result of implementing this research project in the primary classroom, spaces were created for students to experience themselves as more independent learners. Translanguaging was integrated into the learning process offering possibilities to move beyond conservative pedagogic ideologies and to think, discuss, explore, create and evaluate through both linguistic varieties. We looked at how young children were translanguaging and how they embodied their languages, cultures and experiences in the digital storytelling process. The research findings showed how these young children found new ways to express their thinking and to develop their narrative capacity. Moments of creativity, spaces of translanguaging and inter-thinking were key elements during the whole process that enabled students' narrating about imaginary places. Engagement in activities that had meaning for students as well as an authentic purpose enabled linguistic flexibility during the preparation stage. Then such linguistic flexibility enabled translanguaging in motion in terms of thinking through unbounded linguistic modes demonstrating transformation and action while at the same time helping Irene – a child refugee – with words and statements throughout her journey to find her parents.

Making the digital story, *Irene – A refugee's story*, over 7 months and within the aims of the primary curriculum, transformed the way the teacher and students approached learning and clearly showed how new language pedagogies can and should be implemented into the primary classroom.

Irene- A refugee's story: https://vimeo.com/219229870

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Project website

For further information about the project and to see multilingual digital stories and multilingual resources created in the project, visit the project website: https://goldsmithsmdst.com/.

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